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99TH CONGRESS
2d Session

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

REPORT
99-672

ORIGINAL

REQUIRING THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO SUBMIT TO THE HOUSE INTERIOR AND INSULAR AFFAIRS COMMITTEE AND THE SENATE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE CERTAIN INFORMATION REGARDING MICRONESIAN GOVERNMENTS

JULY 15, 1986.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. UDALL, from the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H.R. 4878]

[Including the cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 4878) to require the Secretary of the Interior to submit to the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee and the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee certain information regarding Micronesian governments, having considered the same, report favorably thereon without amendment and recommend that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE

H.R. 4878 is intended to provide the appropriate committees with certification of economic assistance contributions made by the government of Japan to the various Micronesian governments.

BACKGROUND AND NEED

The bill represents another in a series of bipartisan efforts to bring to a close the matter of unpaid Micronesian claims from World War II.

It requires the Secretary of the Interior, no later than September 1, 1986, to submit to the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee and the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee a statement showing the total amount of assistance provided by the government of Japan to the governments of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. This statement should identify the recipient of such assistance, whether such assistance was in the form of grants

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or goods and services, and whether it was provided on or after October 15, 1977.

The October 15, 1977, date is the effective date of Public Law 95-134, which contained a provision authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to pay the remaining Title I Micronesian War Claims owed, if Japan had contributed at least 50 percent of the total awards in goods or services. The amount owed under Title I claims is $24.1 million.

Discussions with Micronesian and U.S. government officials, and newspaper articles, convinced the Public Lands Subcommittee that Japan had contributed much more than $12 million in economic assistance to the Micronesian governments. Therefore, the House-passed joint resolution to approve of the 1985 Compact of Free Association with the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands contained a provision which would have directed the Secretary of the Treasury to pay these claims; however, this provision was excluded from the final Compact legislation.

This bill is yet another effort to resolve this matter. The Pacific Islands trusteeship is coming to a close and this unfinished element of U.S. trusteeship obligations remains unresolved. These claims were awarded by a U.S. commission, established by an Act of Congress in 1971. The commission made its final report in July, 1976, but the compensation has not been forthcoming. These people from the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, the Northern Mariana Islands and Palau have waited too long for compensation for their claims. Equity demands that it is time to conclude this matter.

OVERSIGHT STATEMENT

The Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs will have continuing responsibility for oversight of the implementation of H.R. 4878 after its enactment. No reports and recommendations were received by the Committee pursuant to Rule X, clause 2(b)(2) of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

INFLATIONARY IMPACT STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 2(l)(2) of Rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee finds that enactment of H.R. 4878 will have no inflationary impact on the national economy.

COST AND BUDGET ACT COMPLIANCE

In the opinion of the Committee, enactment of H.R. 4878 will not result in significant costs.

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, June 23, 1986.

Hon. MORRIS K. UDALL,
Chairman, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has reviewed H.R. 4878, a bill to require the Secretary of the Interior to

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submit to the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs and the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources certain information regarding Micronesian governments, as ordered reported by the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, June 18, 1986.

The bill would require the Secretary of the Interior to certify to the Congress by September 1, 1986, the total amount of assistance that the government of Japan has provided to the areas in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. We estimate that this requirement would result in no significant additional cost to the federal government.

Fulfillment of this requirement would, however, remove a legal obstacle that now precludes the payment of sums previously authorized. In Public Law 95–134, the Congress authorized the appropriation of such sums as necessary to the Secretary of the Interior to satisfy U.S. obligations for war claims awarded by the Micronesian Claims Commission, on the condition that no appropriated sums could be paid to Micronesia until the Secretary of the Interior determines that the government of Japan has fulfilled its obligation to pay Micronesian war claims. To date, no such determination has been made, and thus no U.S. payments are possible under current law. When the Secretary makes the determination as directed by H.R. 4878, U.S. payments would be permitted under Public Law 95–134, possibly resulting in appropriations and payments of about $24 million for the remaining claims.

Enactment of the bill would not affect the budgets of state or local governments.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

RUDOLPH G. PENNER, Director.

LEGISTATIVE HISTORY AND COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

H.R. 4878 was introduced on May 21, 1986. Because the subject matter had been discussed numerous times in recent years, there was no separate hearing on this bill. On June 12, 1986, the Public Lands Subcommittee favorably referred the bill to the full Committee. On June 18, 1986, the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, by a voice vote, ordered the bill favorably reported to the House.

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